

ANNUAL REPORT—COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

LETTER

FROM

THE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS,

ACCOMPANIED BY

His annual report of expenditures on public buildings and grounds.

JANUARY 7, 1845.

Read, and laid upon the table.

OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS,
January 6, 1845.

SIR: In compliance with the act of Congress requiring the Commissioner of Public Buildings "to make to Congress, annually, a report of the manner in which all appropriations for the public buildings and grounds have been applied," I have the honor respectfully to report that the expenditures on the public buildings and grounds, and other objects under my charge, have been as follows:

For repairs of the Capitol, attending furnaces and water-closets, lamp-lighting, oil, laborers on the Capitol grounds, keeping iron pipes and wooden fences in order, attendance at the western gates, for trees and plants, taking down and building four chimneys on the Capitol, alteration in water-works, &c.	\$8,948 26
For repairs to windows, glass and glazing, heretofore done by John Purdy	150 00
For digging out the crypt, excavation and making sufficient drains, paving and whitewashing lower story in the north wing of the Capitol, cutting out additional windows for drying and improving the Supreme Court room, &c., pursuant to the proposition of John Skirving	1,750 00
For repairs of the President's house, gardener's salary, laborers, cartage, tools, repairs of copper roof, new floor in basement story, chimney tops, trees for Fountain square and Pennsylvania avenue, and repairs of fences, &c.	3,513 22
For salary of public gardener	1,200 00
For repairing damage done to iron pipes by freshet, and fixing jet d'eau, &c.	1,648 73

For repairing figure in the tympanum of the Capitol -	\$172 92
For removing Persico's statues from the navy-yard to the Capitol, preparing pedestal, &c. -	1,347 40
For lighting Pennsylvania avenue -	697 50
For compensation and contingent expenses of auxiliary watch	6,813 16
For constructing two new furnaces for warming the Capitol, in full of contract with John Skirving -	1,573 00
For compensation to four assistants, drawkeepers at the Potomac bridge, including oil for lamps and machinery, repairs, &c. -	3,811 87
For materials for bridge, from an unexpended balance -	464 76
For repairing damage to iron pipes, from an unexpended balance -	83 72
For covering the roof of the court-house in Alexandria -	433 37
For Treasury building -	133 64
For Patent Office -	117 71

The improvements, alterations, and repairs, directed to be made under the several appropriations of Congress, have met with due attention.

The principal improvements at the Capitol have been the erection of Persico's statues on a suitable pedestal, executed for the purpose, and placed on the blocking at the eastern front of the Capitol; the excavating and draining the lower story under the north wing of the Capitol; cutting out additional windows for drying and improving the Supreme Court room and passages; and building a new vault, according to a plan submitted to the Committee on Public Buildings of the Senate, by John Skirving; the repairing of the figure of Justice in the tympanum; and the construction of two convenient water-closets under the arch of the eastern portico.

The improvements at the jets d'eau, in the enclosure on the west front of the Capitol, were to have been completed by the 1st of November last; but, owing to causes not within the control of the contractors, they were not able to comply with their contract. The work, however, is at this time in such a state of forwardness as to promise a speedy completion.

The repairs of the roof of the President's house, the floor in the basement story, and the chimney-tops, have been properly attended to.

The grounds, trees, shrubs, gravel walks, plats, and borders, at the Capitol and President's house, have been kept in the neatest order by the public gardener and his assistants.

The drawkeepers at the Potomac bridge have discharged their duties with their usual faithfulness. When their attention was not required at the draws, they were actively and usefully employed in repairing the bridge and keeping it in order.

It will be recollected that a considerable breach was made in the bridge by an ice-freshet in 1840, and that appropriations were made by Congress to repair the damage, under the direction of the Secretary of War. It will be seen by the report from the Engineer Department at the last session of Congress, that the part of the bridge repaired was on an improved plan, and that the engineer who planned and superintended the work had it in contemplation, during its progress, to take up about one hundred and thirty feet of the old bridge, immediately adjacent to and east of the former rupture, (as to that extent it had been much injured and weakened,) and to replace it by an additional pier and bridge-span, upon the plan of the repairs; but, for the want of funds, he was not able to carry out his plan,

though the timbers for the proposed additional span were prepared, and the additional pier framed. The timbers and pier are now ready for use whenever Congress shall think proper to make an appropriation for that purpose.

The old part of the bridge is in a state of great decay, and will require large appropriations to keep it in proper repair.

The United States court-house in the town of Alexandria has been covered with tin, as directed by the act of Congress making an appropriation for that purpose. The work has been executed with skill, and upon the most improved plan.

One hundred and twenty-one of the public lots have been sold for the sum of \$3,768 10½.

Estimates for the public buildings and grounds have been laid before the proper committee, as required by an act of Congress.

I have the honor to be, respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. NOLAND, C. P. B.

Hon. JOHN W. JONES,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

